(d) if so, whether any appropriation has been made to the Pension Fund in the past?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) The outgo on account of pensionary charges has been assessed at Rs. 7900 cr. in the Budget Estimates for 2006-07 and an equivalent amount has been provided in the Railway Pension Fund to meet this liability.

(c) and (d) An actuarial assessment study was awarded by Railways and the report submitted by the actuary is under examination. At present, it is seen that the appropriation to Railway Pension Fund is sufficiently adequate to meet with pensionary liabilities on a year-to-year basis.

Package for rail connectivity in North-East Region

1302. SHRI T.R. ZELIANG: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have drawn up any special package towards rail connectivity in respect of North-East Region;

(b) if so, the details of the concept in this direction; and

(c) if not, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) There is no special package as such. However, a number of projects are in progress in the North East Region having a throwforward of over Rs. 6000 crore as on 0.1.04.2006. As per the policy, 10% of budgetary support is being allocated in the North East Region. Further, three projects in the region have been declared as National projects for which part funds are being provided as an additionality to normal Railways Plan.

North Bengal-Sikkim Rail Line

1303. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that while the proposal for rail-lines for North Bengal into Sikkim has been pending for years together, China is going

ahead with a newly launched Tibet rail line from Lhasa towards Nathula in Chumbi Valley;

(b) if so, whether any feasibility survey of the proposed North Bengal-Sikkim rail line has been made; and

(c) if so, the outcome thereof and if not, the reasons for such delay?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) A survey for a new line from Sivok to Singtam was conducted in 2000-01 as per which cost of construction of this 60 Kms long line was assessed as Rs. 1099 crore with negative rate of return (-)34%. The project could not be taken up because of unremunerative nature, constraint of resources and heavy throwforward of ongoing projects. However, based on demands, a survey for new line from Sivok to Rangpo has been taken up. As regards rail development in China, it is mentioned that the Government have seen reports that China plans to construct three more railway lines in the Tibet Autonomous Region-the two lines linking Lhasa with Nyingchi in the east and Xigaze to the west respectively and the third line linking Xigaze with Yadong, near the India-China border-over the next 10 years.

Wheel chair compartment

1304. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Railways have decided to add a reserved wheel chair compartment to all mail express trains by the end of the year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the production of the Compartments for wheel chair users had started in 2001 and by March 31, this year 1159 such compartments has been made; and

(d) if so, why these compartments were not put into use?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) Indian Railways are manufacturing certain passenger coaches, which have a separate compartment specially